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ABSTRACT

Social studies as taught in many schools is anti-intellectual, formless, and ineffective. History, if properly taught, is at the opposite extreme: challenging to the point of being beyond the comprehension of young students. Social studies at its worst is experimental psychological manipulation. At its best it can be a useful synthesis of concepts and insights from various social sciences. Sociology and anthropology offer intellectual tools for understanding social groups and relations, along with perspectives on cultural and physical factors that condition our lives. Economics provides basic insights into matters that every free, intelligent citizen should appreciate: scarcity, supply and demand, and division of labor. Political science and law also provide necessary analytic tools: sovereignty, human rights, balance of power, and democracy. Not to be ignored are the contributions that philosophy, psychology, and theology can give: obligation, duty, freedom, and materialism. Once the essential ideas from the social sciences are identified, they can be applied, in ways that students can understand and use, to the facts of history, geography, and contemporary societies. The challenge for educators is to put together an acceptable syllabus, based on a comprehensive vision of the knowledge and skills that students should be able to command at the end of their school careers. Once that is done, the syllabus must be broken into steps of cumulative learning, each step appropriate to the maturity level of the students at each grade level. (JB)

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HISTORY OR SOCIAL STUDIES?
FRYING PAN OR FIRE

BY

RAYMOND ENGLISH

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HISTORY OR SOCIAL STUDIES?

FRYING PAN OR FIRE

by Raymond English

The unchanging Man of history is wonderfully adaptable both by his power of endurance and in his capacity for detachment. The fact seems to be that the play of his destiny is too great for his fears and too mysterious for his understanding.

Joseph Conrad,
Second Introductory Note
to his novel Victory

What emerges . . . is a composition depicting society and the social studies--sometimes blending harmoniously, at other times carrying complementary themes, and occasionally punctuated with contrapuntal rhythms and tunes.

One major motif occurs in a sometimes joyful and other times ominous key: the social studies reflect and are influenced by the social setting in which they exist. The social upheavals of the 1930s also saw the appearance of scattered radical social studies curricula. The McCarthyism of the 1950s stifled not only political dissent but also academic freedom--extending even into the secondary and elementary schools. The new Great Society of the 1960s also ushered in the New Social Studies. The return to conservatism of the 1970s and '80s was paralleled by a return to the basics--frequently with devastatingly negative impact on both the quality and quality of social studies offerings in the schools.

Stanley P. Wronski and Donald H. Bragaw, Editors.
Preface to Social Sciences: A Fifty-Year Perspective

Washington D.C. National Council for the Social Studies, 1986

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HISTORY OR SOCIAL STUDIES:
FRYING PAN OR FIRE?

The drive for educational reform in the 1980s brought demands for the reinstatement of History and Geography as core subjects in place of Social Studies. At the same time critics wanted to restore strict scholarly standards in these disciplines. First came a committee set up by the Council for Basic Education. Later the demands culminated toward the close of the second Reagan administration in the report of the Bradley Commission on History in Schools, the American Federation of Teachers' Manifesto Educating for Democracy, the report on What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know? by Diane Ravitch and Chester Finn, and Paul Gagnon's powerful and meticulous article "Why Study History?" in Atlantic Monthly, November 1988.

The demand is altogether understandable. But we should recognize that, although Social Studies is largely unsatisfactory, the problems of teaching History in elementary and secondary schools are equally awkward, although in a different fashion. The pages that follow take up the shortcomings, from the educational point of view, of Social Studies and History.

The Frying Pan: Social Studies

Social Studies was substituted for the old academic disciplines of History and Geography at the time when education experts in Teachers Colleges replaced academic scholars from universities as the trend- and standard-setters in secondary education. The substitution was associated with emphasis on the role of the schools as instruments of socialization and democratization. The new

synthetic subject was the means by which democratic citizens were to be formed.

Academic skills and detailed knowledge of chronology and topography were at a discount; the objectives of social studies education were attitudes and behavior suited to a democratic society; intellectual objectives smacked too much of elitism and inequality. Teachers needed not scholarly qualifications but pedagogic aptitudes, that is, ability to manage a class, encourage discussion, and make pupils feel at ease and cooperative. Tales are told of school principals who refused to allow teachers to teach subjects they knew well, on the grounds that that would make them "subject-oriented" rather than "student-oriented." One story tells of a principal who cajoled a teacher who knew no French into trying his hand with the French class. More sympathetic is the football coach, stuck with a world history course, who urged the class to help him "carry the ball through the middle ages."

The problem was not so much these extremes of anti-intellectualism as the general <u>formlessness</u> of Social Studies, which was not a discipline with established techniques, criteria, and content, but an undefined set of procedures and activities. Social Studies was what curriculum committees wanted to make it. The subject passed through many Protean changes, each reflecting a prevailing fashion: citizenship, patriotism, tolerance, "conceptual approach," "inquiry," anti-discrimination, racial and sexual equality, cultural pluralism, ecological concern, global awareness, . . . etc.

Social Studies was so vague in content and objectives that almost any topic could be inserted in the form of a "minicourse,"

special "unit," "supplementary module," or under any other rubric of pedagogic shop-talk. As this article was in preparation, the author received an announcement of four high school "units" with the following titles:

A study of fallacies

A study of prejudice

A study of influence

A study of authority

Each unit takes from 3 to 9 "class weeks." These units are obviously concerned with process, behavior, and attitudes, that is, mind-manipulation. Substantive content is largely irrelevant.

Yet if old-fashioned substantive content in History, Government, and Economics were taught adequately, and if students were required to do frequent written expositions that were critically graded, the students would know about fallacies and logic, would have learned about prejudice and influence, and would certainly be aware of the variable reliability of sources claiming to be authoritative. It is as absurd to think that one can teach people how to think without having some shared knowledge to think about, as it is to teach "education" and pedagogical courses without identifying and mastering the topic to be taught.

The syllabus of social studies education is frequently and radically revised by various state boards and commissions, and every few years the National Council for the Social Studies goes into a species of oracular trance in order to define what its members are trying to achieve. In the late 1980s a National Commission on the Social Studies was in process of gestation. Variations are at once

a trial and a source of profit for textbook manufacturers.

Since the content of the Social Studies is fluid and vague, teachers at any grade level pay scant attention to what--if anything--students already know. Since there is no definite cumulative body of knowledge to be mastered, what the students know is unimportant. Subjectivism is rife. Pressure groups work to ensure that advocacy of their cause is included in instructional materials, especially textbooks, and publishers bow to the pressures. Students, by and large, at least at high school level, tend to agree that Social Studies is the most boring and useless part of the curriculum, while the brighter students recognize its propagandist and often untruthful quality.

In the 1970s History remained part of the curriculum, at least in name, but it was absorbed into an amorphous mass of social therapy and direct suggestion. Pedagogic experts deemed it more desirable to make students feel guilt and remorse about racial and ethnic discrimination, class exploitation, the oppression of women, the destruction of the environment, the genocide of Indians, the imperialist aggressions against Mexico, Venezuela, the Philippines, and Cuba--to name a few subjects of breast-beating and brain-washing in the 1960s and '70s--than to teach the economic, political, and intellectual history of the United States.

Similarly World History became a vehicle for enthusiastic cultural and moral symmetry, in conformity with fashionable anti-Western anti-capitalist fads.

The brutal fact that history was all too often--in Gibbon's phrase--"little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind," was used not to help young persons to

understand the persisting and unstable predicament of human beings, but to predict a totally different Utopian future. Some pedagogues went so far as to deny that the past had any relevance to our present and future condition.

The theory implied that the ugly facets of humanity and the human condition will go a ay if we refuse to think about them. We are to assume that conflict will disappear, much as the young soldier in The Red Badge of Courage had decided--before the Civil War broke out--that wars were things of the past.

> . . . he had regarded battles as crimson blotches on the pages of the past. He had put them as things of the bygone with his thought-images of heavy crowns and high castles. There was a portion of the world's history which he had regarded as the time of wars, but it, he thought, had been long gone over the horizon and had disappeared forever.

Many cheated youngsters emerged from high school unable to locate countries--including their own--on a world map, ignorant of the dates of the Civil War or the name of the first president, incapable of distinguishing Adolf Hitler from Winston Churchill, blank of mind as to the Bill of Rights or the law of supply and demand, and, in short, lacking the basic information necessary for reading a news editorial or following critically a television commentary on recent and current events.

Hence arose the demand for restoring the old academic disciplines, History and Geography. As far as Geography is concerned, there seems no problem. The geographic knowledge required by intelligent citizens is straightforward and manageable, and not beyond the capacity of the average youngster.

The Fire: History

History is a different matter. Like the "dialectic" (the study of controversial moral, philosophical, and political issues) that troubled Plato, history cannot be understood save by mature and experienced persons. Plato proposed postponing controversial dialectic until the student attained the age of thirty-five.

Many teachers, aware of the difficulty of understanding history, reduce it to rote memorization of events and dates; but this is futile. A student may remember such stuff for as long as is necessary to pass the test, but unless students know the relevance and interconnections of events, they will forget whatever they memorized. The fact remains: serious history is probably the subject requiring a higher degree of experience--both personal and vicarious-- than any other in the curriculum.

A person may be a genius in mathematics and science at age fourteen, but great original achievements in history-writing, as in philosophy and political thought, come from mature observers of the human tragi-comedy. Gibbon's first volume was published when he was thirty-nine; Macaulay was forty-eight and had been a member of Parliament and Secretary of War when Volume I of his best-selling History of England appeared; Mommsen's historical works dated from his thirty-seventh year; Thucydides must have been almost fifty when he wrote The Peloponnesian War after a political and military career; Henry Adams was fifty-one when his history of the Jefferson and Madison administrations was published.

There are other problems with high school history. Much of history is grim, cruel, corrupt, and shocking. One recalls the state of Mr. Boffin, in Our Mutual Friend, after hearing the accounts of some Roman Emperors in Gibbon. He was especially

disturbed by Commodus, whose name he pronounced "Commodious."

> "Wegg [Boffin's reader] takes it easy, but upon-my-soul to a old bird like myself these are scarers. And even now that Commodious is strangled, I don't see a way to bettering ourselves." Mr. Boffin added as he turned his pensive steps . . . , "I didn't think this morning there was half so many Scarers in Print. But I'm in for it now!"

When we are in our 'teens the adult world is often puzzling, sometimes frightening, sometimes repulsive. We ourselves are exploring our own psyche, to find out who we are. We cannot bring the emerging reality around into focus. We swing between cynicism and utopianism. If we become politically conscious this is the time when we may espouse some extreme and radical ideology. Historians and sociologists have pointed out that revolutionary upheavals tend to occur in societies in which, for some reason or other, the age-group 13-25 happens to be abnormally large in comparison to older age-groups. This was the case with the baby-boom generations in the United States in the 1960s. It is also said to have been the case in Luther's Germany and in France about 1789. It is a phenomenon observable in the Third World in our time.

Another characteristic frequently met in teenagers is passionate religious conversion. In short, adolescent and post-adolescent psychological states are not conducive to a firm and critical grasp of history. Those conditions do, however, help young people to enjoy great creative literature and poetry in a willing suspension of disbelief. They also encourage romantic love.

John P. Roche, in an essay on "The Realities of Foreign Policy Making," remarked:

> The sad fact is that even first-class students from leading institutions arrive at various colleges and graduate schools--including professional schools of international

affairs--as historical innocents.

Given young students' inevitable lack of experience, this situation may be unavoidable.

Many other obstacles to the honest and effective teaching of history in high school (and often in college and university) could be mentioned. Not least is the fact that scholarly interpretations of great events are often cautious and ambivalent, indicating the difficulty of judging the motives and the quality of decisions of the actors. These distinctions are often too subtle for young students, and as a result history instruction may become a vehicle for ignorant oversimplification or, worse, conscious propaganda. Instead of learning history students learn (if they learn anything) an arbitrary set of slogans, which may be chauvinistic, complacent, subversive, or guilt-ridden, according to prevailing pedagogic fads and the power of pressure groups.

As one surveys the difficulties, one is tempted to copy Plato's suggestion and say: Postpone history until students are in their 30s! But that solution must await a better order of society, about the time when the coquecigrues come.

Persons who know no history are without social memory: they do not know where they have been, what they have done, or how to think about what to do next as members of society; nor do they know what kinds of decisions are likely to be effective or disastrous; nor can they visualize with any degree of confidence how other persons and other societies are likely to behave. Historical knowledge enhances our judgment of probability.

Under these circumstances, our educators have no alternative to

attempting the impossible: that is, ensuring that young people know some history. For those students not going to college the teacher's duty is especially binding. A man who can look back and see, if only as in a glass darkly, the road that he and his ancestors have traveled is in a position to visualize the road ahead, with its curves and gradients and hazards, even though a curtain of mist hangs over it.

The Pitfall of Recent History

We must recognize yet one further practical problem in secondary social studies and history. This is the failure of many teachers to cover recent events in their American history courses. There are all kinds of excuses for this omission: too much to cover in the time allotted; inadequate reading materials; teacher uncertainty; teachers' unwillingness to risk controversy; and (a purist objection) recent history is not history, because the key documentation is not available. All quite understandable excuses. Yet to send young Americans into the post-high school world without the knowledge they need in order to think and vote on foreign policy issues is inexcusable.

Speaking personally, I recall proceeding from one of the best high schools in England to Cambridge University, and beginning to realize my abysmal ignorance of any history since the Boer War, and my lack of knowledge about any details of wars, strategy, tactics, and military organization. These things I learned the hard way in six years' of military service. That service might have been unnecessary if I and my generation, and my parents and their generation, and the parallel generations in France and the United

States had known sufficient history to take early steps to checkmate Hitler.

Winston Churchill wrote that his purpose in writing The Second World War was:

> to show how easily the tragedy of the Second World War could have been prevented; how the malice of the wicked was reinforced by the weakness of the virtuous; how the structure and habits of democratic states, unless they are welded into larger organisms, lack those elements of persistence and conviction which can alone give security to the humble masses; how, even in matters of self-preservation, no policy is pursued for even ten or fifteen years at a time....

Like history in general, recent history is too difficult to teach to teenagers; but it cannot be evaded. One is reminded of an old paradox: Education, like government, is a tyrannical, almost intolerable, infringement of human freedom; but, like government, it is indispensable. Since to evade recent history is to deprive youngsters of important knowledge, we must in humility lay the foundation on which our students can build as they grow in years and wisdom.

"Teaching in humility" means showing students how to suspend judgment when necessary on events of the past, and how to weigh different possible explanations or interpretations. This does not mean an attitude of moral indifference or neutrality, nor should students assume that the actors at the time could refuse to make decisions even though their knowledge of the facts and their ability to forsee the outcome were severely limited.

A Case Study in Recent History: The Cuban Missiles

Consider, for example, the Cuban Missile Crisis of October

1962. A respected teacher said that he enjoyed examining the crisis with students because:

> The crisis had a clear beginning; there were clear alternatives; the President chose the 'right' solution; the policy worked, and the United States won.

Yet historian Paul Johnson wrote:

> Kennedy, while winning a public relations victory, rewarded the aggressive Soviet act with two substantial concessions. The minor one was the withdrawal of the Jupiter missiles [from Turkey], supposedly on the grounds of their obsolescence. Far more important, however, was Kennedy's acquiescence in the continuation of a Communist regime in Cuba, in open military alliance with Soviet Russia. On the practical issue of Cuba and Caribbean security, Kennedy lost the missile crisis. It was an American defeat: the worst it had so far suffered in the Cold War.
> Paul Johnson, Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Eighties. New York: Harper and Row, 1983, pp. 627-628.

And a historian of recent American Foreign Policy, John Spanier, summed up less harshly but still critically:

> American firmness and determination left Moscow little choice. For once, therefore, it was the Soviets who had to decide whether to fire the first shot--to break the American blockade of their missile-carrying ships--and thus risk a possible escalation of the conflict. The Kremlin backed down. The level of tension having been raised, it also was rapidly lowered once American determination and willingness to use American power became clear. In Secretary of State Dean Rusk's picturesque phrase, "We were eyeball to eyeball, and the other fellow blinked." Interestingly enough, particularly in view of Kennedy's critics who felt a Soviet humiliation in Cuba would compel the Soviet leader to recoup his lost prestige by forcing the West out of Berlin (with the clear implication that the United States should let him do so or desist in Cuba), Khrushchev called off both challenges. America's superior power, as demonstrated in the Caribbean, could also be marshaled in Berlin, and it therefore seemed advisable to terminate the tension over the Western half of the former German capital city as well. But it ought to be noted that while the Soviet Union withdrew its missiles, the United States publicly declared that it would not invade Cuba. Thus Castro survived.
> John Spanier, American Foreign Policy Since World War II, 10th edition. New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1985, P. 108.

President Kennedy's opposite number, the Soviet leader Khrushchev, insisted that his aim in placing missiles in Cuba was to protect his ally, Castro, against attack by the United States. If that was Khrushchev's objective, it was achieved when Kennedy promised not to interfere with Castro.

Interestingly, a conference of the protagonists--American, Soviet, and Cuban--held in Moscow in January 1989, with the object of sharing information in a kind of postmortem inquiry, revealed that Castro and the Soviets knew that a few close associates of Kennedy had proposed a serious and effective second raid on Cuba to take place in October 1962 in order to overthrow Fidel Castro. Former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara denied that there was a real intention to carry out this plan, but the documentary evidence seemed to contradict him.

At the same conference the inadequacy of United States intelligence was also revealed. For example, the American government assumed that there were 10,000 Soviet troops on the island, whereas there were 40,000; it assumed also that no nuclear warheads had been landed, whereas there were 20, ready to be mounted on some of the 42 missiles, which were targeted on major American cities. Castro, according to the new evidence, urged Khrushchev to fire the missiles.

The purpose of this discussion of a single critical episode is to underline the ambiguity of recent history. It is not impossible to discuss and even to analyze such topics, but it is surely important to treat them cautiously and with as little dogmatism as possible. It is not quite a Wittgensteinian dead end ("Of that there is no knowing, thereof let us be silent") but a case of: "Of

that about which our knowledge is incomplete, thereof let us speak tentatively."

Another Case Study: The Revisionist Story

Another striking example of the problems of recent history is the anti-Western interpretation of Soviet events and policies since the 1930s. The story would examine the apparent delusions of Western left-wing intellectuals about the nature of Stalin and Stalinism in the '30s, '40s, and '50s, beginning with Sidney and Beatrice Webb's dream-picture of the Soviet Union as A New Civilization.

We would then follow the persistent attempts to show that Soviet Communism was more efficient, more just, and more free than the capitalist, mixed-economy democracies. This delusion paralleled the revisionist interpretation of Soviet-Western relations, especially the "Cold War," the nuclear arms race, and episodes such as the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Korean and Vietnam wars, and Castro's revolution in Cuba.

The dream-sequence has been shattered by unexpected revelations from Soviet sources in the glasnost and perestroika years, 1985-? Pravda denounced the history books used in Soviet schools as "lies." The atrocities of Stalinism were finally admitted in all their naked brutality. The economic failure of the system could be concealed no longer. The Afghan invasion was recognized as a mistake and the Brezhnev Doctrine seemed abandoned at least as far as Afghanistan was concerned. And an article in Novy Mir blamed Stalin, not the capitalist-imperialists, for the Cold War.

The Nuclear Obsession

In many schools recent history is unscrupulously distorted in an attempt to bias students against defense and in favor of pacifism. Here is another trap into which honest teachers may fall if they rely on the slanted instructional materials issued by certain organizations for use in isolated units of instruction.

Nuclear weapons introduce a new and unprecedented dimension in international politics, but they should not paralyze the rational and critical faculty. We should remember that only two relatively primitive atomic bombs have ever been used in war, and that since 1945 violent changes and brutal cruelties have been carried out on a shamefully large scale by conventional arms.

Understanding the nuclear arsenals and strategies of the superpowers is desirable, but it should not obscure subversive wars, guerrilla tactics, the spread of terrorism, and the employment by the superpowers of satellites, foreign mercenaries, and internal rebellion to achieve their ends.

Liddell Hart's prediction at the dawn of the nuclear age is worth emphasizing:

> The nuclear deterrent . . . does not apply and cannot be applied to the deterrence of subtler forms of aggression. Through its unsuitability for the purpose it tends to stimulate and encourage them. (Strategy, New American Library, p. 361. italics added)

In the nineteenth century great powers kept some order and stability in international affairs by brushfire wars waged by professional troops and by "gunboat diplomacy." But the deadlocking danger of nuclear confrontation in our time has made possible chaos and mass slaughter in most corners of the world.

To mention a few examples of horror: the Biafran civil war in Nigeria; the decimation of Cambodia's population; genocidal wars and famines in Ethiopia and Sudan; the Korean war; the war in Vietnam; the long-drawn war of Iraq and Iran; the massacres by Idi Amin in Uganda and the Emperor Bokasa in the Central African Empire (now Republic); Quaddafi's wars on Chad; the long war in Angola with Cuban mercenaries in a key role; the agony of Lebanon; the persisting instability of the Middle East; the ten-year struggle against invasion in Afghanistan; recurrent military coups in half the lands of Latin America; and endemic rebellion in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Such is the chaotic scene of our world of "global awareness," aspirations for "human rights," and hopes of Third World development. (The Suez crisis in 1956 and the Falkland Islands war in 1982 were exceptions to the rule that great powers no longer intervene directly in local cases of aggression.)

Through the tangle of international affairs run threads of terrorism--bombings, kidnappings, hostage-holding--threads which the ostensibly civilized and orderly states seem incapable of eliminating. Piracy, in the international law sense of "enemies of the human race," has broken out on a scale greater than the piracy of the sixteenth centuries. Perhaps the situation should be compared with the piracy coinciding with the breakdown of the <u>pax Romana</u>.

The predicament is further complicated by the sponsorship of terrorism by states such as Libya and Iran, not to mention the veiled support provided by the Soviet Union and its satellite states.

A facet of the piratical chaos of our time that deserves

attention is the international drug trade: cocaine from Latin America; heroin from Turkey, Afghanistan, and Southeast Asia; marijuana from anywhere. Whether the drug trade is, as some claim, a political instrument to undermine Western Civilization, or is simply an example of the ruthless greed and suicidal stupidity of which our species is capable, the phenomenon reveals another aspect of the paralysis of orderly countries in the nuclear age.

In short: although the possibility of nuclear devastation and the necessity for nuclear deterrence are matters that no teacher of recent history may neglect, we must not let them prevent us from discussing the many ugly, cruel, and dangerous aspects of international politics in the post-World War II world. Awareness of the whole context of events is essential.

Intelligence and Counterintelligence

Nuclear weaponry is not the only unprecedented development in international relations in our time. The exploration of space, the use of orbiting surveillance satellites, and the possibility of effective space defense against nuclear missiles offer a further mind-straining challenge to teachers and students.

A third element in the complex challenges of our time is the area of intelligence: spying, prying, lying, buying, and stultifying. These things are as old as human conflict, but in our time they are enhanced by unceasing competition in technological improvement and invention and by fantastic advances in communication and computation.

We still do not know precisely how indispensable to Allied victory in World War II was the breaking of Japan's top-secret code

by the United States and of Germany's by Great Britain. As more and more information is released, these achievements begin to appear more and more crucial. (See, for example, the survey in John Barron's Breaking the Ring: The Rise and Fall of the Walker Family Spy Network, New York: Avon, 1988, pp. 28-37).

Similarly we do not know the extent to which Soviet knowledge of American codes, resulting from the Walker family's espionage, damaged American policy and interests in the 1970s. Barron, in the book mentioned above, points to a number of suspicious "leaks" of United States policy. Toward the end of American involvement in Vietnam the North Vietnamese "usually had forewarning of the B-52 strikes . . . It was uncanny. We never figured it out." The Soviets, too, knew exactly where exercises of the U.S. Navy were to take place. The first attempt to rescue American hostages in Iran (April 1980) failed miserably. The Carter administration planned a second mission involving a raid by five thousand troops with ten thousand in reserve. However, with staggering prescience, the Soviets deployed twenty-two divisions, including two airborne ones, on the border of Iran. The American raid was called off. These instances are mentioned in Barron's Breaking the Ring, pp. 23-26.

In the case of the breaking of American codes in the 1970s, the culprits were, as far as is known, four greedy, conscienceless Americans who used their top-secret cryptographer jobs in the Navy to steal information for the KGB. They got away with this for fifteen years. If there had been a major crisis in those years the Soviets could have countered every American move almost before it was made.

Students should recognize the threats of espionage and

betrayal, and something of the temptations and devices involved. Many spies in our time have been motivated not by greed, but by ideological passion coupled with some psychological flaw. The spies who enabled the soviets to manufacture atom-bombs unexpectedly quickly were Communist intellectuals: some British, such as Alan Nunn May and Klaus Fuchs (an ex-German), some American, such as the Rosenbergs. Certain types of spy are called "moles." These are ostensibly members of our own or allies' intelligence or counterintelligence services, but in fact are agents of a hostile power. Most of the cases we know about involve Communist intellectuals such as the British Philby, MacLean, Burgess, Blunt, and Long, and Americans Harry Dexter White, Michael Straight, and Alger Hiss. Recently we have seen the case of Howard, a CIA agent with personal problems who defected to the Soviet Union when he was on the verge of exposure. A number of other cases in the United States and its NATO allies occurred in the 1970s and '80s.

Enough has been said to indicate the difficulties we shall meet in jumping from the frying pan of Social Studies into the lurid fire of History. Is the predicament hopeless and inescapable?

Possible Synthesis: Social Science and History

Social Studies, at least from the 1950s through most of the 1980s, has been in many schools anti-intellectual, formless, and ineffective. History, if properly taught, is at the opposite extreme: challenging to the point of being beyond the comprehension of young students and young teachers. The beginning of wisdom in education is to recognize the magnitude of our difficulties. The next move is to break the task into more or less manageable steps.

Social Studies at its worst is experimental psychological manipulation. At its best it can be a useful synthesis of concepts and insights from various social sciences. Sociology and anthropology offer intellectual tools for understanding social groups and relations, along with perspectives on cultural and physical factors that condition our lives. Economics provides basic insights into matters that every free, intelligent citizen should appreciate: scarcity, supply and demand, cost and price, efficiency, divison of labor, capital, and similar micro-economic concerns. From macro-economics can be drawn concepts such as Gross National Product, Balance of Payments, inflation, deficit, money supply, and so forth--ideas that we need in order to read newspapers or to follow arguments about economic policy.

Political science and law provide a further set of unnecessary analytic tools: sovereignty, loyalty, human rights, balance of power, constitutionalism, totalitarianism, dictatorship, republic, democracy, executive, legislative, judiciary, aggression, international law, and many more. Not to be ignored are the inputs that philosophy, psychology, and (some will shy away) theology can give: obligation, duty, hierarchy of values, freedom, semantic dilemmas, trancendence, materialism, and so on.

The author's experience as a writer of social science textbooks suggests that when we have identified the essential ideas from the social sciences, these can be applied in ways that pupils and students can understand and use, to the facts of history, geography, and contemporary societies. If you are studying and teaching about medieval Europe many of the concepts listed above are available to guide your analysis. Once students learn to use these analytic

tools, episodes of history and areas of human geography become manageable bits of knowledge about ourselves and our species, and one bit of knowledge fits into and builds on the others.

Some Examples

A few random examples of combined history and social science may make this point clearer. Consider the economic grievances of the Colonists in the 1760s and '70s: taxation without representation, shortage of hard money as the result of British mercantilism, and hardships caused by trade restrictions and monopolies such as that of the East India Company (also an aspect of the mercantile system). These are historically significant, but they also illustrate basic economic principles--principles that Adam Smith was laying down in The Wealth of Nations in the year of the Declaration of Independence.

Those principles can be applied in varying degrees to the English Civil War, to the unrest under the Articles of the Confederation (debtors versus creditors and hard and soft currency), to the fight over the Bank and over currency, under Andrew Jackson, and the ensuing long depression. Monopolies were a bone of contention again during the Anti-Trust controversies, and in the experiments of the "First New Deal" that was overturned by the Supreme Court. Indeed, politicians persist and will probably always persist in striving to use political power to give special economic privileges to their friends and supporters. Recurrent experiments or attempted experiments with protective tariffs re-enact the fallacies of the mercantile system.

Fruitful analytic concepts for use in American history are

sociological/anthropological ideas of group relations and conflicting culture patterns. How well or badly our ancestors dealt with these awkward predicaments is a recurrent theme in history. Not that America is exceptional. The Old Testament is replete with brutal ethnic (? genocidal) conflict. The record of Europe during the barbarian invasions, the story of the Crusades, the cruelties of the Norman Conquest of England, and similar episodes parallel the Spanish and English relations with the aboriginal inhabitants of the Americas, as European serfdom and ethnic prejudice parallel African slavery and its legacies in the New World.

Similar examples could illustrate principles of political science, such as the contrast between limited constitutional government and autocracy or dictatorship. Why do most revolutions lead to dictatorship, and why did that not occur in America? Another important political science concept is the tendency of parties or factions to destroy popular representative government (see Federalist X). How has America avoided that calamity? And why or how have Western democracies, at least for the time being, generally taken the venom out of party government?

To sum up: the analytic and comparative approach, used in high schools, provides meaning and explanation to an otherwise arbitrary succession of events.

The Total, Cumulative Curriculum K-12

The great challenge for educators is to put together an acceptable syllabus, based on a comprehensive vision of the knowledge and skills that, ideally, the students should be able to command at the end of their school careers. Once that is done, the

syllabus must be broken into steps of cumulative learning, each step appropriate to the maturity level of the students at that grade.

Teachers and students must understand that important ideas learned are not "disposable." On the contrary, they are the continuing warp on the loom of social science and history.

One caveat: although the material learned at each level is tailored to the interests and capacities of the students, we must make certain that students are not taught anything that must be "unlearned" later. If we use--as we should--myths, poetry, and folklore, students should be clear that these are not on the same plane of veracity as, say, an account of the writing and signing of the Declaration of Independence or an explanation of earth's orbit and axial tilt.

What is described here calls for a radical switch to an intellectual approach to Social Science, with a careful and critical use of history and geography as the vehicles through which analytical concepts and debatable ideas can be examined and tested. A further equally radical switch must be made from the episodic, twig-hopping, non-sequential social studies curriculum that teachers have grown accustomed to. This haphazard curriculum, interspersed with odds and ends of indoctrination on "peace," "critical thinking," "values clarification," "contraception, condoms, and AIDS," and whatever else enthusiasts dream up, must be replaced with planned, sequential, academically endorsed instruction and learning.

One intellectual temptation that must be rejected is the notion that high school students can be turned into miniature historical researchers. To place three or four documents in front of students may be a desirable exercise; to imagine that the students will in

this way acquire research skills is absurd. If we push such ambitious projects to logical conclusions we shall find that once again we are distracting youngsters from the basic knowledge they need in order to understand their role in society and their society's role in the world.

In moving toward the goals outlined, we should bear in mind the pitfalls noted in earlier pages. Above all we must demand textbooks and teacher's guides that restore intellectual challenge and scholarly integrity to education in the Social Sciences, History, and Geography. It is not an unrealistic or unreasonable request.